

CALIFORNIA REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
SAN FRANCISCO BAY REGION

RESOLUTION NO. R2-2002-0086

**RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF ALAMEDA COUNTY WATER DISTRICT
REQUEST FOR FUNDING FROM THE STATE WATER POLLUTION
CLEANUP AND ABATEMENT ACCOUNT FOR VERTICAL CONDUIT STUDY**

Whereas, vertical conduits are pathways that allow groundwater to move between shallow groundwater zones and deeper groundwater zones, potentially allowing groundwater contamination to impact deeper aquifers and water supply wells screened in those aquifers. Vertical conduits may be manmade (e.g. abandoned wells or improperly sealed wells) or natural (e.g. root holes);

Whereas, Alameda County Water District (ACWD) has expressed interest in applying for funding from the State Water Pollution Cleanup and Abatement Account (CAA) to conduct a vertical conduit study as described in its August 15, 2002, proposal;

Whereas, Section 13442 of the California Water Code states that upon application by a public agency with authority to clean up waste or abate the effects thereof, the State Board may order moneys to be paid from the CAA to the agency to assist it in cleaning up the waste or abating its effect on waters of the State;

Whereas, Regional Board staff has established a Groundwater Committee to propose activities and tasks that would better protect groundwater resources. The Groundwater Committee has prepared a Draft Comprehensive Groundwater Protection Evaluation for South San Francisco Bay Basins (Draft Report dated December 2001) in coordination with ACWD, Santa Clara Valley Water District, and San Mateo County Department of Environmental Health. The Draft Report identifies vertical conduits as a significant threat to groundwater quality in these groundwater basins and contains several recommendations to reduce this threat:

- Preparation of a comprehensive study on vertical conduit location and sealing
- Adaptation by other well-permitting agencies of ACWD's program for abandoned well searches at the time of property development or re-development
- Adoption of local ordinances requiring well searches and proper well destruction at the time of development or redevelopment
- Requirement for site-specific vertical conduit studies at all groundwater contamination sites overseen by the Regional Board

Whereas, Regional Board staff developed interim guidance on vertical conduits in 1986 and this guidance has been used by many dischargers and local oversight agencies since then to locate and destroy vertical conduits near groundwater contamination plumes.

This interim guidance pre-dates many search tools (e.g. the internet) and field investigation techniques, and would benefit from being updated;

Whereas, ACWD has developed special expertise in the area of vertical conduits and would be well qualified to implement some of the above-cited recommendations from the Draft Comprehensive Groundwater Protection Evaluation for South San Francisco Bay Basins. As part of ACWD's vertical conduit program, ACWD has created a database of historical and active wells. ACWD has also developed a comprehensive well search program in cooperation with local city planning and building departments. ACWD is notified when land-use changes are proposed for properties, which gives ACWD the opportunity to conduct a search for wells before development occurs. A record check, including a site visit, is then conducted for each property to determine whether any wells exist on the property. Wells that will be impacted by the proposed project, including all abandoned wells, are required to be destroyed prior to development of the site;

Whereas, funding from the CAA would enable ACWD to update Regional Board staff's 1986 interim guidance and prepare the following documents:

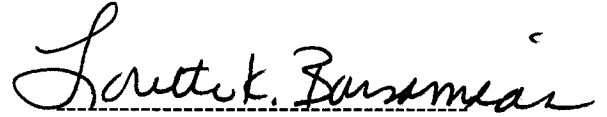
- Guidance for dischargers and oversight agencies - finding vertical conduits in the vicinity of groundwater contamination sites during remedial investigations
- Guidance for well permitting agencies - finding and properly destroying vertical conduits, working in concert with either oversight agencies or local permitting agencies
- Guidance for local permitting agencies - requiring landowners to search for and properly destroy vertical conduits when proposing significant development or redevelopment

Whereas, the ACWD study will have direct benefits for the Regional Board's groundwater protection efforts throughout the region, by better enabling dischargers, Board staff, other oversight agencies, and well permitting agencies to locate and destroy vertical conduits. The ACWD study will have additional benefits for other Regional Boards and the State Board, since vertical conduits present a threat to groundwater in other areas of the state;

Whereas, this Regional Board is responsible for ensuring that present and potential beneficial uses applicable to the main groundwater basins in the Region are protected from the pollution and nuisance that may occur as a result of waste discharges.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, San Francisco Bay Region, hereby supports Alameda County Water District's forthcoming Resolution requesting up to \$100,000 from the State Water Pollution Cleanup and Abatement Account for a vertical conduit study.

I, Loretta K. Barsamian, Executive Officer, do hereby certify the foregoing is a full, true, and correct copy of a Resolution adopted by the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, San Francisco Bay Region, on August 20, 2002.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Loretta K. Barsamian". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal dashed line.

Loretta K. Barsamian
Executive Officer